

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

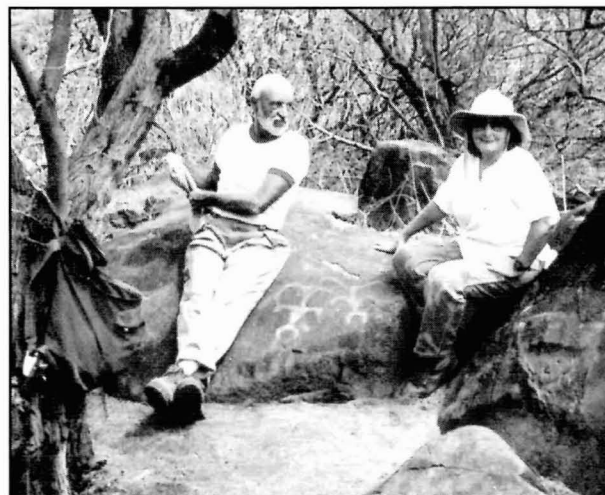
GEORGIA LEE & FRANK MORIN

- Q:** How did you get into archaeology, and specifically Easter Island archaeology? What triggered your interest?
- GL:** I dreamed of going to Easter Island since I was about 12 years old and read an old *National Geographic* magazine that contained a story about the island and the statues. I never really thought I'd get there. I dreamed of someday going to see this special place, little expecting it to become my life's work. Decades later, while recording rock painting sites in California through the UC Berkeley's UREP program, the opportunity came to extend my project to Easter Island. When my permit finally came from the Consejo de Monumentales Nacionales, I could hardly believe my good fortune.
- FM:** In 1985 at age 68, I met Georgia Lee. Her bumper sticker read "Archaeologists will date any old thing". This was a good start to the happiest years of my life. She invited me to accompany her on a lecture cruise to Easter Island in 1986. So began collaboration with her in recording and publishing about the petroglyphs of Easter Island, Hawai'i, and California.
- Q:** Who or what do you consider as your most significant influence (scientific or otherwise) either as a person or a particular work (or series of works)?
- GL:** The work of Katherine Routledge was a great inspiration. As for more contemporary influences, Carlyle Smith was most encouraging and supportive, as was my UCLA professor, Clement Meighan, who believed that the study of rock art was a legitimate part of archaeology — an opinion not shared by many archaeologists at that time.
- FM:** I supported Georgia by becoming very good at finding petroglyphs and then surveying and mapping the sites. I also set up on the computer the *Rapa Nui Journal* plus fourteen of the Foundation's books.
- Q:** What theory or project of yours turned out to be different from what you had expected as, for example, a complete surprise?
- GL:** Although I knew that the rock art in South America was very different from that of Easter Island, I expected to find closer correspondence between the rock art of Easter Island and that of Hawai'i, the Marquesas, and Tahiti. The magnitude of difference

is amazing. Quite simply, Easter Island has the most complex and extraordinary rock art in Oceania. Also, the numbers of rock art sites on the island was not suspected. When I began my Easter Island petroglyph project, I knew from the literature that there were petroglyphs. But I did not anticipate the numbers of sites, their sizes and their complexity. I initially thought I could document them all in a few months; instead, it took five years!

Although many Rapanui islanders are or were aware of the numerous sites, previous researchers from the outside had focused or reported on only those that were readily available and most visible. My database was in excess of 4,000 petroglyphs, not counting many thousands more cupules (cup-shaped petroglyphs). This is a large number for a small island! I probably would have missed many of them if were not for several Rapanui who worked with me: Felipe Teao, Raul Paoa, and Keremo Ika. I also had help from Edmundo Edwards, a Chilean who has lived most of his life there, and I must mention Frank Morin, who worked with me during all those years on Rapa Nui, and continued on with our study of the rock art of the Hawaiian Islands.

- FM:** I was lonely and had mocked up in my imagination a cute chick who would go hiking with me on the sand dunes. My universe, however, had better ideas, and brought Georgia into my life. The fun we have had together for over 20 years far surpasses anything I could have imagined.



Frank & Georgia at Kukui Point (near Shipwreck Beach), north shore of Lana'i, 1988
(Photographer unknown.)

- Q:** As a renowned female archaeologist, have you found that your sex played a role in making your research projects more difficult, or perhaps easier? Would you encourage women to go into the field of archaeology?

GL: In some instances, men tend to take a condescending view toward female archaeologists. This is particularly so, I think, in “macho” countries where the male ego tends to get in the way. So a woman archaeologist has to be better than her male counterpart just to have a level playing field. Fortunately, this is not too difficult.

As for encouraging women to go into archaeology, I would encourage anyone to go into archaeology! What is more interesting and absorbing than discovering and understanding how people lived in the past? How they faced and solved their problems (or not!), and how they struggled to comprehend their universe? Their story is our story. What happened here on earth in the past is fascinating stuff.



Georgia & Frank taking a break from the Gotland conference to do some shopping in Visby, 2007.
(Photographer: Paul Horley.)

Q: What would you have done if you had not pursued your current line(s) of research and interests?

GL: I most likely would have continued with my studies of American Indians, focusing on the Chumash Indians of California, and probably I would have stayed with a teaching career, boring my students to death.

FM: I have no idea what I would have done had I not met Georgia. I was retired and living alone, hiking on the nearby sand dunes. This behavior worried my son Michael who had attended a lecture by Georgia and decided that I should meet her. So Michael and his girlfriend introduced us.

Q: What was your best “Eureka” moment?

GL: The comprehension that a relationship could be established between petroglyph motif and clan territory. By studying petroglyph motif distribution and comparing that to the clan maps of Routledge, suddenly a pattern seemed clear. This occurred while documenting the great panel at Papa Vaka on Easter Island, which contains very large and well carved Polynesian fishhooks. It was the proverbial light bulb going on!

FM: For some time after meeting Georgia, I was undecided about a long relationship. One day, in meditation, it flashed on me that she, in fact, was the *one* for me and I decided to go with that 100%.

Q: What is your favorite Easter Island site and why?

GL: Oh this is hard! So many places on the island are very special to me! I love Ovahe, and the magical site at Hau Koka in the caldera at Rano Kau. It is difficult to pick a “favorite” although I have to admit that I do have special feelings for ‘Orongo, and Mata Ngarau in particular. We worked up there on the edge of the cliff for months, sometimes in sunshine, but often in rain and winds that seemed strong enough to blow us away. The site itself has a mystical feeling for me and, on a clear day, the view is absolutely without parallel: The ocean stretches off, seemingly forever, and Motu Nui sparkles in that incredibly blue sea.

FM: My favorite Easter Island site is the beach at Ovahe. Here I spent many happy hours going naked into the Great Mother.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish (in archaeology) on Easter Island in the future?

GL: Well, I am now retired from fieldwork but I would love to work with someone who would be interested in putting many unassigned petroglyph sites on the map with GPS technology — which we lacked during the years I was working on the island.

FM: I am treasurer of the Easter Island Foundation and that is enough.

Q: What's the most important thing you'd like visitors to know about Easter Island?

GL: That the island is more than just stone statues on an isolated bit of land. There is a living, breathing society there! Some books about the island give the impression that there is nothing but ruins and statues. And, also, visitors need to know that the island is fragile and endangered, and under great stress. The infrastructure is a nightmare of poor planning; livestock is allowed to roam freely, trampling on the archaeological sites; there are (by the thousands) too many vehicles. There are no controls, or if there are controls, no one pays any attention to them. Shacks appear on known archaeological sites. And precious information is lost forever.

FM: That the island was populated by Polynesians from the West.

Q: What are you currently reading?

GL: Well, when not reading Winnie the Pooh to my 3-year old great-grandson, I am reading *Where Fate Beckons. The Life of Jean-Francois de la Pérouse*, by John Dunmore; *Vaka Moana, Voyages of the Ancestors*, edited by K.R. Howe; and *Mission Accom-*

plished or How We Won the War in Iraq by Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky.

FM: I read investment articles and *The Method of the Siddhas* by Adi Da.

Q: Date and place of birth?

GL: January 12, 1926; Alameda, California

FM: October 10, 1917; Laconia, New Hampshire.

Q: Credentials?

GL: AA degree, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, 1945; BA and Teaching Credential, California College of Arts and Crafts, 1948; MA degree, Art History, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1978; PhD, Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, 1986.

FM: BS and MS, University of New Hampshire, 1935 to 1940; PhD *abd*, University of Wisconsin; Member of the Technical Staff, Bell Telephone Laboratories, 1941-1962; Associate Director, Director and Distinguished Fellow, Science Center, North American Aviation 1962-1979.

REVIEWS

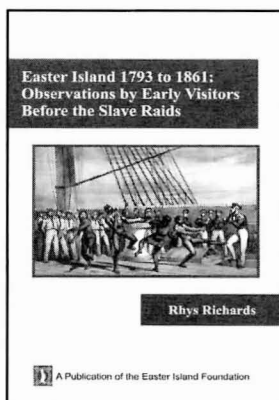
EASTER ISLAND 1793 TO 1861: OBSERVATIONS BY EARLY VISITORS BEFORE THE SLAVE RAIDS

Rhys Richards

Easter Island Foundation, 2008
Soft cover, ISBN 978-1-880636-28-2
\$15.00 U.S.

Review by Paul Horley

Easter Island is a special place that has attracted much attention since Jacob Roggeveen introduced it to European society. In most publications only a few additional visits to Rapa Nui are usually mentioned in significant detail — namely the expeditions of Felipe González y Haedo, James Cook,



Jean François de Galaup (Comte de La Pérouse), Yuri Lisiansky, Otto von Kotzebue, and Abel Aubert du Petit-Thouars, creating the impression that only a handful of ships circumnavigated or anchored at the island in the pre-missionary period. However, the true number of visitors was much higher. Not all of them left detailed accounts; sometimes it was little more than a couple of lines in a ship's logbook, to be found buried in the archives of various libraries. The dispersal of historical sources, not to mention the fact that many appear in different languages, complicates the process of comparative analysis and the generalization of existing data. This situation has significantly improved with the publication of a new book by Rhys Richards which presents extracts and descriptions for more than thirty accounts of early visitors to the Navel of the World.

At 144 pages, the book contains a wealth of historical documentation. To avoid unnecessary repetition and to emphasize key observations, the accounts are properly abbreviated after careful analysis. Several reports are given in full length, such as those of James Wolfe (HMS *Blossom*, 1825), Hugh Cuming (*Discovery*, 1827), and surgeon R. Guthrie (HMS *Seringapatam*, 1830); the last two cases also present additional detailed discussion and comments by Steven Roger Fischer. The account of Abel Aubert du Petit-Thouars (*Venus*, 1838), originally written in French, was specially translated